

Since the beginning of this Congress, Republicans have been committed to ending business as usual here in Washington. That means not ignoring bad news—not even about Medicare. This spring, the Medicare trustees board reported that Medicare will go bankrupt in 7 years. Democrats, have completely ignored this news. They offer no ideas on how to save Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans will not let Medicare go bankrupt, and we will not allow Medicare to become a political football in a cheap game of generational warfare.

CONTINUE AMERICORPS

(Mr. BAESLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BAESLER. Mr. Speaker, I have been a consistent supporter of AmeriCorps. I have seen the difference it has meant for my State of Kentucky and charities all over the country.

AmeriCorps is lean and nonbureaucratic, has moved much of the decisionmaking out to the States, and is accountable.

When I see an organization that can take tough actions, it impresses me. The Corporation for National Service just made a very tough decision: it cut off a grant in midstream to the ACORN Housing Corporation.

After a demonstration by a different ACORN in March stopped a speech by the Speaker, some asked whether AmeriCorps had been involved. AmeriCorps acted immediately. They got a signed statement that no AmeriCorps member was involved, and that the two ACORN's were entirely separate.

AmeriCorps could have stopped there. But it didn't. The CEO of the Corporation asked the IG to investigate, and to find out if any of the AmeriCorps money was being used to benefit ACORN.

The IG didn't find any AmeriCorps members involved in the demonstration, but did find that there was a close relationship between the two ACORN's. AmeriCorps has always said it wouldn't permit advocacy, directly or indirectly, so it stopped the grant in its tracks.

Now, it's a better news story when an AmeriCorps program does something great, as they do every day in Kentucky. But it's also important when AmeriCorps does something that won't make the news, but shows the ability to do the right thing just as clearly. I just hope that this Congress also does the right thing, and continues AmeriCorps.

MEDICARE BASHING

(Mr. KIM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I am tired of listening to this Medicare bashing. I

want to point out exactly what we are proposing on Medicare on this chart. I want Members to pay attention to this.

This black line is trust fund balance. Right now we have a \$150 billion balance, but it is rapidly depleting. At the year 2002, the money will disappear. This blue line is spent. By the time we hit 2002, there will not be any money to spend. There will be a stop payment to all the elderly people.

We recognize this problem because the trust fund commissioned their report back in April. They are the ones that said that, not we; we did not say it. They are the ones, all the members are Clinton appointees. So we come up with this idea. All we try to do is slow down the increase, rate of increase a little bit.

The red one is Mr. Clinton's plan; as we can see, not much difference. All we are trying to do is lower a little bit. We are still spending more money. Mr. Clinton recognized we have to see this problem on this Medicare plan. I do not know why they keep calling this a cut. Is it a cut to the Members?

THE GINGRICH CORPORATE WELFARE MODEL

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this morning Speaker GINGRICH will present a check to students who participate in the Earning by Learning Program which pays schoolchildren \$2 for every book they read.

Speaker GINGRICH has touted this program for years, stressing the low overhead as a major selling point. In a speech this January the Speaker declared:

The money only goes to the kids * * * So if you have \$1,000 you can pay for 500 books, whereas in the welfare state model, if you have \$1,000, you pay \$850 of it for the bureaucracy.

But, lo and behold, according to the Wall Street Journal this week, Mr. GINGRICH's official biographer, Mel Steely, also happens to run this program. And according to this report Mr. Steely and two friends were paid 90 percent, yes 90 percent, of the money raised in the past year for the program.

Ninety percent for the Speaker's friends and 10 percent for the children; this is the way, this is the way things work in the Gingrich corporate welfare model.

THE AUDIT WILL CONTINUE

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, we had the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse do an audit of the House books. When I say we, I mean House Republicans. We had promised as a matter of the Contract With America that the first thing that we would vote on on the first day

was to have an audit of the House books that have not been audited as far as I know of in history on an exterior basis. We have never had an external audit of the House books. We did that.

They published their audit just yesterday. I want to read three lines from it. First of all, they say: The House lacks the organization and structure to periodically prepare financial statements. The methods of accounting was simplistic and ill-suited for an organization the size of the House. And in conclusion, because the House's accounting and reporting methods were outdated and of limited utility, we do not express, we cannot express an opinion on the accompanying consolidated financial statements.

What they are saying is our books are such a mess that they cannot even render a financial opinion. We promised that we could fix this. We did the audit. We will continue to do the audit. We will bring the reforms and make good on the promises that we made.

EARNING BY LEARNING CRONYISM

(Mr. WARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a new program initiated by Speaker GINGRICH called Earning by Learning, a reading program which purports to pay schoolchildren \$2 for every book they read. However, according to a story in Monday's Wall Street Journal, last year 90 percent of the money went to an old friend of the Speaker, who is working on the Speaker's biography and was, in fact, on his congressional payroll. That left only 10 cents on the dollar for the kids.

This stands in marked contrast to what the Speaker has said a million times, including a televised lecture on January 21, 1995, that "The only money goes to the kids." He elaborated and said, "So if you have \$1,000, you can pay for 500 books." But what we see is typical cronyism.

Mr. Speaker, use all of the money for books, don't mislead the American people, especially when you are using our Nation's children as your stage props.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule: The Committee on Banking and Financial Services, the Committee on Commerce, the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, the Committee